



# State of Louisiana

Division of Administration  
Office of the Commissioner

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **State and City Officials Outline Safety Preparations, Plan of Action for Pallas Hotel Implosion on July 22**

**NEW ORLEANS** – The State of Louisiana will move forward with plans to implode the former Pallas Hotel the morning of Sunday, July 22, making way for the construction of the new University Medical Center, state and city officials announced Tuesday.

The hotel suffered no structural damage from a fire last week, and demolition experts that assessed the building deemed the planned implosion to be safe for the neighboring community members, first responders and the project's crew.

The state has established a hotline for residents with questions or concerns about the implosion. It can be accessed Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. by calling (855) 592-8146.

Commissioner of Administration Paul Rainwater said, "This implosion marks an important milestone for the University Medical Center project, which ultimately will bring a state-of-the-art medical facility to downtown New Orleans and provide world-class medical care to the City and the entire region. We appreciate the cooperation of all of our state and local partners and also the patience and cooperation of the community that lives and works in the area around the former Pallas Hotel. We know that, when construction is complete, the University Medical Center will be state-of-the-art hospital of which the entire City can be proud."

New Orleans Deputy Mayor of Public Safety Lt. Col. Jerry Sneed said, "The City and State agencies are working together closely to ensure that residents and businesses are impacted by the implosion as little as possible. We are asking those residents and businesses impacted by the mandatory evacuation to work with us so that the implosion will go off smoothly."

Michael Stack, DOTD District Administrator said, "Safety is always a top priority, so DOTD will be present before, during and after the implosion, to monitor activity along the corridor and the I-10 structure itself. The mandatory evacuation should be taken seriously. We strongly encourage all area residents to leave the area of the implosion as a temporary, but necessary precaution."

## **PLAN OF ACTION**

To make way for the University Medical Center in downtown New Orleans, the State of Louisiana will implode the former Pallas Hotel building, located at the corner of Claiborne Avenue and Canal Streets, on the morning of Sunday, July 22, around 8 a.m. The actual time of implosion may change slightly depending on conditions on that day.

The city of New Orleans will execute a mandatory evacuation of several blocks around the site, beginning for residents at 7 p.m. on Saturday, July 21, and affected businesses at 2 a.m. on Sunday, on July 22. By 4 a.m. the streets in the secured area, which is bounded north and south from Bienville Street to Tulane Avenue and east and west from S. Villere Street to Johnson Street, will be closed to all pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

Beginning at 4 a.m., the New Orleans Fire Department, with the assistance of the New Orleans Police Department, Emergency Medical Services and the state, will initiate a structure-to-structure search in the area that is evacuated to verify the dwellings are uninhabited. It is anticipated that the searches will be concluded by 7 a.m.

The evacuation is mandatory. People who refuse to leave will be escorted out of the area by the New Orleans Police Department and Louisiana State Police. The state is providing housing overnight for all affected residents and their pets if they do not have another place to stay.

Officials plan to close Interstate 10 in both directions between the Orleans Avenue Exit and the Pontchartrain Expressway beginning at 7 a.m.

Once the area is clear of pedestrians, residents and traffic and secured, the state's demolition contractor will begin final preparations for the implosion. Following the eight-to-nine second implosion, the state's demolition contractor and Louisiana State Police will check the area to ensure that it is safe.

The Louisiana State Police will then clear Department of Transportation and Development engineers to inspect the I-10 overpass to ensure that it is structurally sound and safe for drivers. Following this inspection, debris will be removed from the overpass if necessary and it will be reopened. Officials will reopen streets to traffic and residents as they are inspected and cleared of debris. Most streets and areas should be reopened within several hours of the implosion.

## **ABOUT THE IMPLOSION**

The implosion of the Pallas Hotel will be executed and monitored by Controlled Demolition, Inc. (CDI) and Contaminant Control, Inc. (CCI). CDI has been conducting demolition work internationally since the 1940s and has demolished thousands of structures through the controlled use of explosives. CCI has been in business since 1989 offering Environmental Service, Remediation, Demolition, and Emergency Services.

The Pallas Hotel implosion is expected to last no more than eight or nine seconds. Following the blast a cloud of dust will emerge from around the building site. The dust will be heaviest in the area immediately surrounding the former hotel.

Generally, heavy dust will only travel between 150 to 175 feet from the site of the implosion, with lighter dust settling as far as five or six blocks away, based on the prevailing winds on the morning of the implosion. The dust cloud is expected to dissipate within 10 minutes. The dust is not toxic, but people with allergies or respiratory problems should avoid the area near the implosion site for a few hours.

Air quality and vibration monitoring will be conducted before, during, and after the implosion. Inspection of I-10 and clean-up of the area will begin immediately following the implosion. Shutdown duration is subject to clean-up and inspection results on the day of the event.

### **STREET CLOSURES**

A section of Interstate 10 will be closed before the implosion and will reopen after any dust is removed from the road and the structure has been inspected by the Department of Transportation and Development. The closure is expected to last several hours.

A complete closure of I-10 both east and west bound will be implemented by DOTD personnel and state and local law enforcement. DOTD's Regional Traffic Management Center (RTMC) will maintain video surveillance of the area, monitor the traffic control plan's implementation, report any safety or congestion concerns and can remotely manage any plan adjustment that may be needed.

Motorist Assistance Patrol (MAP) units will monitor congestion in areas without camera coverage and report problems to the RTMC. RTMC will post directional and closure messages on the Variable Message Signs, give status updates via e-mail and Twitter and communicate with police agencies regarding problems and progress of the closures.

Streets will be reopened to traffic as dust is removed from the area, which is expected to take several hours. Cleaning up debris around the Pallas Hotel site will begin following the implosion. Removing the remnants of the imploded hotel from the UMC site will take several months.

### **MEDIA**

Members of the media with proper credentials will be able to view the implosion from a pre-determined location on the morning of the implosion. To access the viewing area, members of the media must sign a liability waiver and receive a safety briefing prior to the implosion. The implosion is occurring on an active construction site, and the media must be escorted while on site.